

# Make Sure Workers Wear Fall Protection While Deicing



In the winter, snow and ice can build up on roofs, overhangs, eaves, signs, etc. If the ice isn't removed, it can damage the structure and lead to cave-ins or even collapses. In addition, chunks of ice can fall from these areas and injure or kill workers, visitors or passers-by. So it's important that you have workers deice the exterior of your facilities.

But make sure that workers are safe while engaged in deicing procedures. For example, require them to wear fall protection, provide the necessary PPE, ensure that they're trained on its use and take steps to make sure they actually use this equipment. Otherwise, they can get seriously injured or worse.

Unfortunately, that's what happened to a worker in Alberta.

He was assigned to deice an airplane from the bucket of a truck. While doing so, he fell from the bucket and suffered fatal head injuries. At the time, the worker, who was an experienced 17-year employee, wasn't wearing his fall protection harness or lanyard as required. So his employer was charged with two fall protection violations.

The court acquitted the employer, ruling that it'd exercised due diligence.

The company had extensive safety policies and procedures for deicing that required workers to wear restraints when working from an open bucket. The employer also provided appropriate fall protection equipment.

In addition, workers were well trained on the deicing procedures and requirements. In fact, at the beginning of each winter season, the members of the deicing crew were retrained, added the court.

The company also had extensive policies requiring workers to follow its policies and procedures relating to wearing PPE. So the court concluded that this was a

'case of very experienced employees deliberately failing to carry out the mandatory policy to wear fall protection equipment when de-icing aircraft' [*R. v. Servisair Inc.*, [2012] ABPC 63 (CanLII), March 9, 2012].